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ABSTRACT

This article describes the trends and the future prospects of partnership arrangements among colleges, universities, and schools. A 1989 survey of 1,286 public and private colleges and universities revealed the following: (1) partnership arrangements are being made by colleges and universities with senior high, middle, and elementary schools; (2) partnerships are formed for various reasons; (3) partnerships tend to focus on developing mathematics, science, and writing skills; and (4) partnership programs were found to have increased in sophistication and quality from those examined in 1987. Additionally, it was revealed that partnership programs served the following four purposes: developing programs and services for students; developing programs and services for educators; coordinating, developing, and assessing the curriculum and instruction; and developing programs to mobilize, direct, and promote the sharing of educational resources. Partnership programs have also expanded from local involvement to regional, state, and national levels. It is believed that members of the education profession have begun viewing themselves as part of a single system of education stretching from kindergarten through graduate school, and that this professional transformation is the most important contributor to the partnership movement. (GLR)

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THE PARTNERSHIP TERRAIN

by Louis S. Albert

Attacking problems in new and interesting ways, collaborations between schools and colleges bring students, teachers, and administrators together across sectors and grade levels. In this essay, from the introduction to AAHE's new publication *Linking America's Schools and Colleges: Guide to Partnerships & National Directory,* AAHE VP Louis Albert describes the trends and the future of the partnership movement.

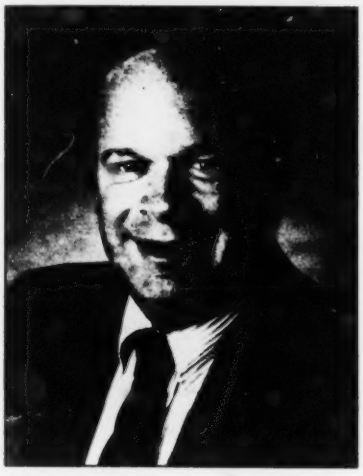
Over the past decade, large numbers of American colleges and universities have entered into partnership arrangements with schools. Some of these partnerships connect schools with colleges of education, continuing long-standing and traditional interinstitutional relationships. Some, like the Holmes Group or the Coalition of Essential Schools, constitute national efforts to reform the system—through changes in teacher education, through curriculum development, and through school restructuring.

But most of the recently formed partnerships are local, grassroots efforts that place college and university professionals into new and very different relationships with their counterparts in the schools. These relationships are characterized by collegiality and respect, and by the awareness that the partners are acting out of mutual, enlightened self-interest. Unlike the more traditional ways in which colleges relate to schools, the new partnerships are not one-way streets; schools and colleges both gain from their participation in partnership activities.

In the new partnerships, all sectors of higher education are involved. Partnerships are just as likely to be found in community colleges as in research universities. And, more often than not, faculty and administrators from the arts and sciences—rather than from schools of education—are the key postsecondary participants in the collaborative process.

National Survey Results

In 1989, Franklin Wilbur and Leo Lambert surveyed colleges and universities nationwide in order to learn about the nature and extent of their partnership arrangements with schools. (The survey was a follow-on to their 1987 survey, the results of which were reported in the AAHE publication *The National Directory of School-College Partnerships: Current Models and Practices.*)



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From among the 1,286 colleges and universities responding, Wilbur and Lambert selected some 350 profiles to publish in AAHE's 1991 *Linking America's Schools and Colleges: Guide to Partnerships & National Directory.* (The volume also includes directory information for all the respondents.)

Compared with the results of the 1987 survey, the 1989 results reveal a striking increase in the sophistication and quality of local partnerships. They tell the story of a school-college-university partnership phenomenon that is contributing in significant ways to the quality and effectiveness of American education and to improved achievement by students at all levels.

Where are these partnerships? What benefits do they promise for students, faculty, and curricula? Where is the partnership movement headed? The survey results begin to answer these key questions and others.

What kinds of institutions are involved? The number and variety of partnership activities uncovered in the survey lend support to the observation that we are indeed in the middle of a "partnership movement."

Partnerships are found in every state, in both public and private institutions. Of the 1,286 responding colleges and universities, 882 are public and 404 are private.

Partnerships target all grade levels; some target more than one grade level. The 1987 *National Directory of School-College Partnerships* reported mainly on high school/college collaboration. But, the current database indicates that

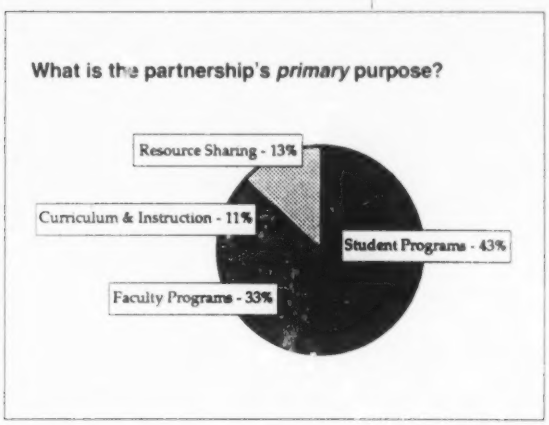
many partnership programs are now aimed at elementary and middle schools, reflecting a growing understanding of the need to intervene on behalf of students in their earlier years of schooling.

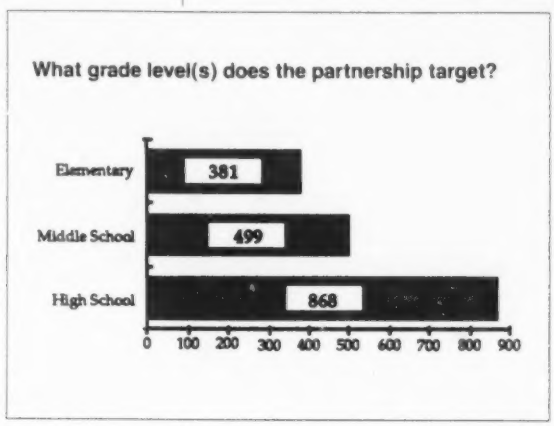
When did the partnership movement begin? Although the survey uncovered a significant number of partnerships more than ten years old (some go back more than twenty years), the mid-1980s marked the beginning of a period of rapid growth in partnership number and variety.

Some people credit the school reform reports, especially *A Nation At Risk* in 1984, with driving the expansion of collaborative programs. Others suggest that colleges and universities, out of concern for potential enrollment shortfalls, entered into partnerships as a way of increasing the number of students in the post-secondary pipeline.

But, an analysis of the survey responses also points to other, more specific reasons why partnerships form—for example, to improve teaching in science or mathematics, to provide precollegiate on-campus experiences for middle school students, or to design and implement a multicultural curriculum.

What purposes do partnership programs serve? Survey respondents were asked to identify the primary focus or purpose of their partnership activities. Their responses fall into four categories: (1) programs and services for students; (2) programs and services for educators; (3) coordination, development, and assessment of curriculum and instruction; and (4) programs to mobilize, direct, and promote sharing of educational resources.


What is the partnership's *primary* purpose?
Resource Sharing - 13%
Curriculum & Instruction - 11%
Student Programs - 43%
Faculty Programs - 33%



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Programs and services aimed at providing direct services for students include a large number of early-identification and early-intervention programs, programs that bring K-12 students to college and university campuses for enrichment work during the summer, after school, and on weekends. Many of these programs connect student achievement in school with the promise of college scholarships.

Programs for educators typically are directed at the professional-development needs of faculty and administrators. Faculty and administrators also are deeply involved in partnership activities that focus on curriculum and materials development. The resource-sharing partnerships often take the form of interinstitutional consortial arrangements or "adopt-a-school" programs.

What subject areas do partnerships focus on? Respondents were asked to indicate whether their collaborative programs focus on specific subject areas. Many reported more than one area of concentration, with mathematics, science, and writing leading the list regardless of whether the partnership targets high school, middle school, or elementary school teachers and/or students.

National, Regional, and State Advocates

While most partnerships are clearly local in origin and scope, a number of national, regional, and statewide organizations are important contributors to the partnership movement. These advocates for collaboration, as part of their larger efforts to improve student achievement through improving teaching and learning at all levels, often support local collaborative programs.

At the national level, the advocates include organizations such as The College Board, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the Council of Chief State School Officers, and the Education Commission of the States and a number of higher education associations, including the American Association for Higher Education.

With funding from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, AAHE conducts a National

Project in Support of Academic Alliances, which are local groups of school and college faculty from the same or related disciplines who meet regularly throughout the academic year. In cooperation with The College Board, AAHE also runs an annual National Conference on School/College Collaboration, through AAHE's National Office on School/College Collaboration.

The regional accrediting associations are getting into the business of encouraging collaborative programs, too. In 1990, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) started a full-time Office of School/College Collaboration. In 1989, the Middle States Association (MSA) adopted a resolution encouraging development of Academic Alliances and other forms of collaboration within its member institutions. NEASC, MSA, and a number of other accrediting associations are talking about how to encourage colleges and schools to include collaborative activities in their accreditation self-studies.

And support for partnership activities is growing at the state level. Since the mid-1980s, the California Academic Partnership Program has funded a number of innovative projects. New Jersey, Tennessee, Arkansas, Virginia, Wisconsin, Ohio, Georgia, Texas, North Dakota, Minnesota, New York, and Massachusetts, among others, have supported partnership programs at the state level.

No list of advocates for collaboration would be complete without mentioning the discipline-based faculty professional societies. The American Physical Society is an active supporter of Academic Alliances and other collaborative activities. In addition, a variety of programs and/or statements of support have been developed under the auspices of the American Historical Association, the Mathematics Association of America, the American Chemical Society, the National Geographic Society, the National Science Teachers Association, and the Modern Language Association.

Foundations also have played a major role in shaping the partnership movement. Many programs owe their origins to the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, or the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Government-sponsored foundations such as the National Science Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities have played similar supportive roles.

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Where Is the Partnership Movement Going?

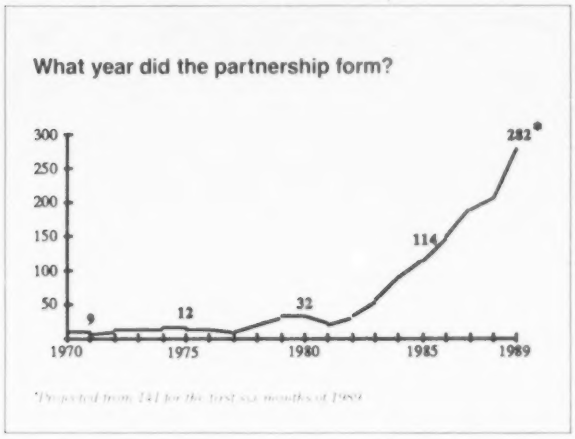
Partnerships are not an end in themselves. But, increasingly, partnerships are being seen by faculty, administrators, and community leaders as an important means of achieving the particular objectives of improving educational opportunities for students and enhancing student performance. And in the process, the educators who work collaboratively with one another are redefining the profession of teaching.

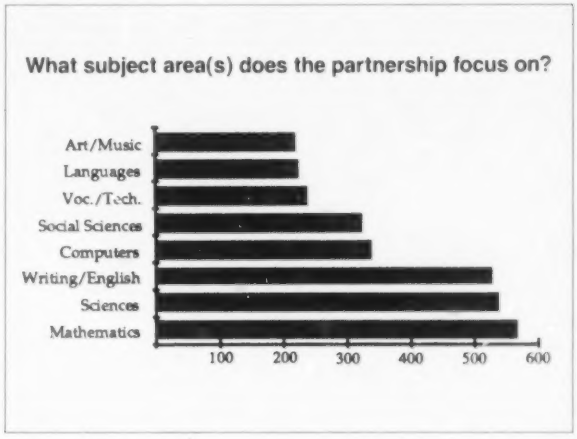
They see themselves as part of a single system of education stretching unbroken from kindergarten through graduate school. They have gained new respect for the sophistication and complexities of the teaching and learning process at all levels, because in successful partnerships a faculty member's level of professionalism is not seen as inversely proportional to the age of the students being taught. And they have formed new professional relationships with one another based upon a sense of interdependence and shared mission.

A transformed education profession should prove, in the long run, to be one of the most important contributions of the partnership movement. ■

Note

See the back cover of this issue of the *Bulletin* for information about ordering *Linking America's Schools and Colleges: Guide to Partnerships & National Directory*.





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